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Waterworld

Summer is quickly approaching and you will soon be looking for a fun way to cool off. Here are 10 great water sports that can help you get the most out of this summer, and several great tips for mastering each.

1 Scuba Diving

Scuba diving is a form of diving wherein divers carry their own supply of compressed air in a tank, allowing them a certain autonomy from the umbilical hoses and contraptions associated with other kinds of diving. Most towns near large bodies of water have scuba rental, retail, and training facilities, which you can check for at scubaspots.com. The sport can be dangerous without the proper training. There is no central regulatory body, though there are a number of large diving organizations (such as acuc.org and padi.com/scuba) that train and certify divers and instructors. Most outlets require certification from such before supplying an individual with certain equipment and services.



2 Bodyboarding

Bodyboarding (AKA boogieboarding) is a kind of wave riding that differs from surfing in that the rider typically lies facedown on a much smaller board. The increased stability of such a position means that beginners generally have a much higher success rate than in other wave-riding methods—which increases the fun factor and makes this summer pastime more accessible to families with younger children.

Most seaside towns have retailers that supply the necessary equipment. Boards come in a variety of sizes and shapes, depending on what particular style of bodyboarding you wish to attempt. Check out bodyboard-directory.com and bodyboarder.com for resources.



3 Kayaking

Kayaking is differentiated from canoeing by the seating position (facing forward, legs in front) and the use of a double-bladed paddle. There are two main types of kayak: closed deck and sit-on-top; and six main self-explanatory classifications: slalom, polo, surf, touring/expedition, whitewater, and general recreation, which require different sizes and hull configurations. Kayak retail and rental outlets can be found in most conurbations near a large body of water or a river. Tandem and

even triple-seater boats are available, making this an ideal watersport for the family, as younger children can always have a caregiver in attendance.

4 Windsurfing

Windsurfing is essentially a board with a sail mounted on it via a universal joint, with which the rider steers the craft. Typically, lessons are needed to teach handling, and the basic skills can be learned in a few hours from one of the many windsurfing schools around the country. The gulf between basic skills and advanced techniques in windsurfing is more pronounced than in other water sports, but one can partake sedately and quite readily from a young age well into retirement, while more extreme modes of windsurfing are still available for the more athletic.



5 Whitewater Rafting

Whitewater rafting more often uses inflatable boats rather than actual rafts to navigate rivers. There are six classifications of white water, varying in scale from grade 1 (very basic), where only very slight maneuvering may be required, to grade 6, where the real possibility of death or serious injury may occur. Professional rafting operators generally pervade the pastime, supplying the equipment, know-how, and guides. Such services thereby eliminate a lot of the danger, though waivers are still typically required.

6 Wakeboarding

Wakeboarding is to waterskiing what snowboarding is to snow skiing. The rider is towed on a wakeboard, typically behind a motorized watercraft or even an all-terrain vehicle. In addition, wakeboarding parks with aerial closed course cables and winches have sprung up around the country, though true wakeboarding tends to involve interacting with the wake of a watercraft, allowing numerous jumps and tricks to be executed. This is an ideal family activity, as the speed and therefore the safety can be tightly controlled to allow younger children to take a step up from being simply towed in an inflatable.





7 Surfing

Surfing is one of the most popular water sports, and also one of the most difficult to master. As one can personally choose what conditions to surf in, it is a relatively safe sport for beginners, though it is never recommended to surf alone. Greater danger occurs as [skill levels](#) increase, and more dangerous seas and swells are sought. There are many [surf schools](#) and [surf camps](#) all around the world that offer lessons in the basic required skills, though after preliminary instruction

many people simply learn by doing. Not recommended for younger children, surfing can be a year-round sport with the correct equipment.

8 Sailing

Sail-powered boats combine with a [rudder](#) and an underwater foil such as a [keel](#) or [centerboard](#) to maneuver. Adjusting these various mechanisms can influence the direction and speed. The basics of sailing remain the same throughout all skill levels, though the size of the craft largely determine the number and size of the sails. The more sails there are, the more complex sailing becomes. This is a great pastime for the whole family, and any large body of recreational water usually has some kind of [sailing school](#). Sailing is a sport that can be enjoyed year-round.



9 Waterskiing

Waterskiers are towed behind a [motorized watercraft](#) (or by a [cable ski installation](#)) on a body of water. Participants can wear one ski (with two rubber foot bindings) or two (one on each foot). This a great sport that can be enjoyed by most age ranges, as the level of difficulty is determined by the participants. It is also great for families, as three people are required at a minimum: the driver, the skier, and a

spotter to facilitate communication between the two. Costs can be high, though, for both rental and purchase of a motorboat. [Waterskiing lessons](#) are available almost everywhere there is a large body of water.

10 Barefoot Waterskiing

Barefoot waterskiing (AKA barefooting) is a form of waterskiing that negates the use of skis. There is other necessary equipment, however: special floating [padded wetsuits](#) are generally used instead of conventional [life jackets](#), allowing certain tricks to be performed and to protect the participant from the buffeting endemic to the sport. Special [boats](#) that produce little wake and can travel at the necessary higher barefooting speeds are also often used. Owing to the higher speeds and specialist equipment required, barefoot waterskiing doesn't tend to lend itself well to a family activity. Lessons are available at some ski schools.